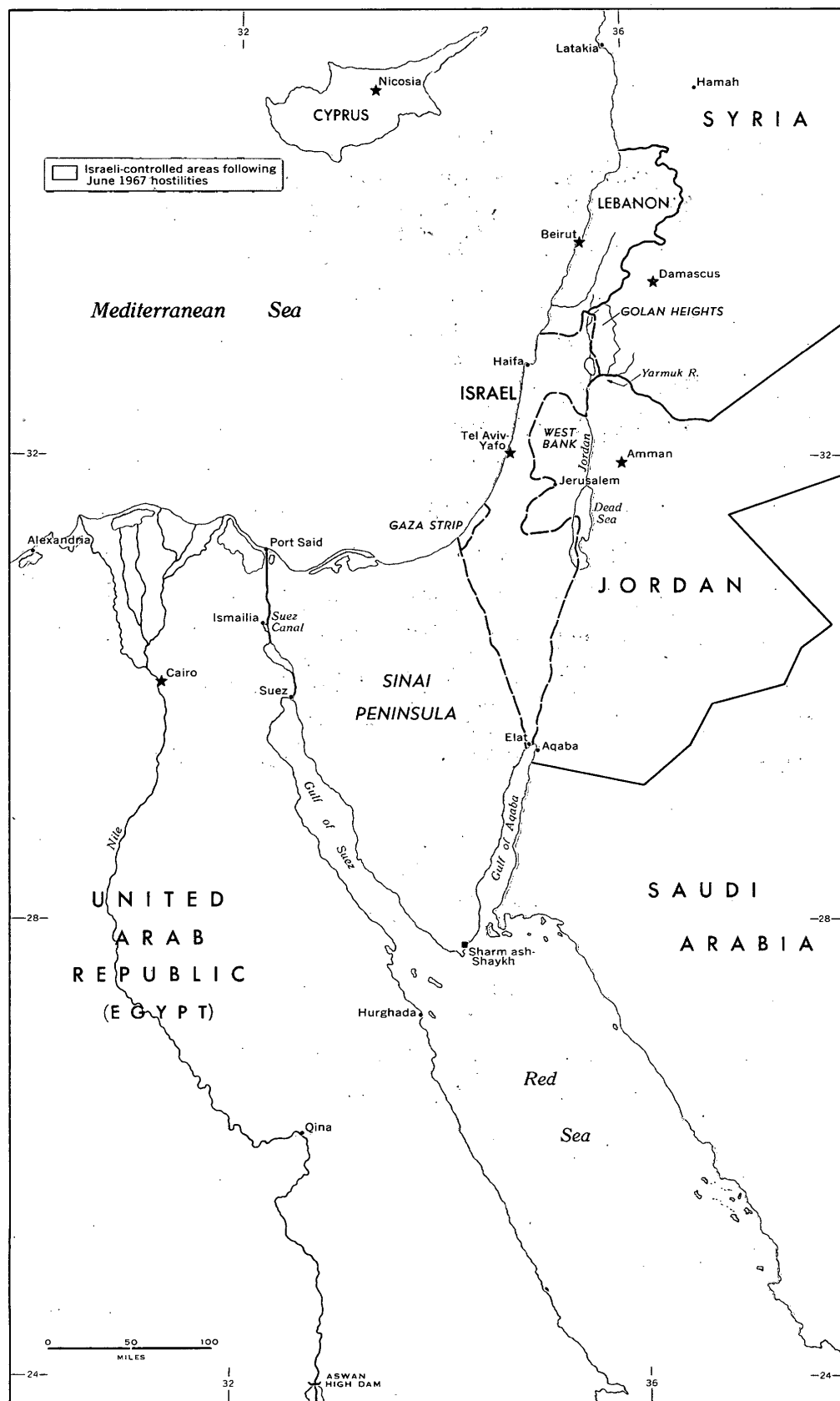


The President's Daily Brief

31 January 1969

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LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
31 JANUARY 1969



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

1 February 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
31 JANUARY 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

Cairo's semi-official newspaper Al Ahram, in a commentary yesterday, criticized the Iraqi Government for the sensational manner in which it handled the recent hanging of the 14 alleged spies and for inappropriate timing. The commentary, in answer to Iraqi complaints that Arab nations were not giving adequate support, stated that Iraq had "a completely sound case"; however, the matter was not one "for which festivals are staged," and it occurred at a time of "important international initiatives." (FBIS 11, 31 Jan 1969)

EUROPE

There is nothing of significance to report.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing of significance to report.

VIETNAM

General Nguyen Van Kiem, chief of President Thieu's military cabinet, was severely wounded in an assassination attempt last night. Terrorists tossed explosives into his car and two escorting vehicles as he was driving through central Saigon. (Various press, 1 Feb 1969)

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

OKINAWA

Labor organizers are said to have agreed to call off the general strike planned for 4 February against the presence of B-52s. The labor leaders are to meet today with their rank-and-file membership to seek approval. The police expect, however, that a small demonstration by extremists will take place at the US airbase at Kadena even if the strike is averted.

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I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

Soviet Politburo member Aleksandr Shelepin announced in Cairo on 29 January that a Russian airlift of relief supplies for Palestinian refugees in Syria and Jordan would begin early in February. According to a Moscow broadcast, the food and clothing will be channeled through the central trade unions' organization. At present, the refugees are cared for by the UN. This splashy propaganda operation will doubtless be popular in the Middle East, although perhaps not with the government of Jordan. Many Arab terrorists reside in the refugee camps, and the guerrillas probably will exploit such indirect Soviet aid in their recruiting drives. Until now, Moscow had avoided becoming embroiled with the refugees, contending that the "imperialists" had caused their problem and it was up to "them" to solve it.

EUROPE

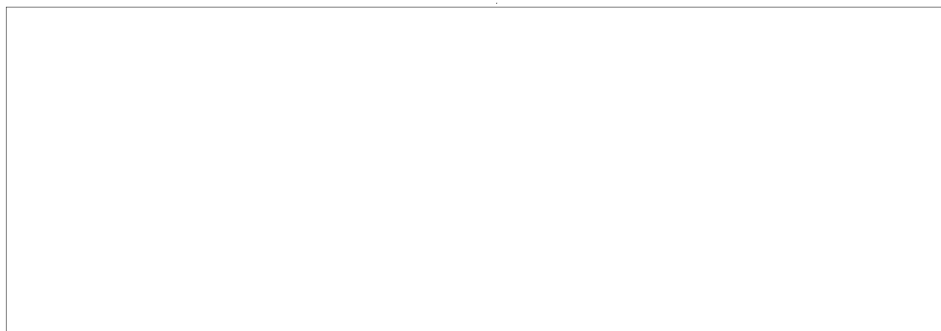
There is nothing of significance to report.

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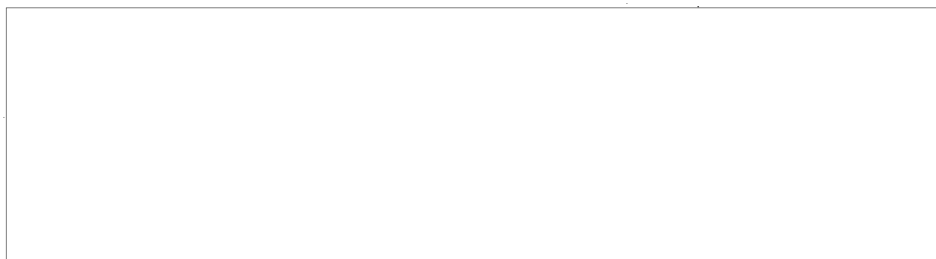
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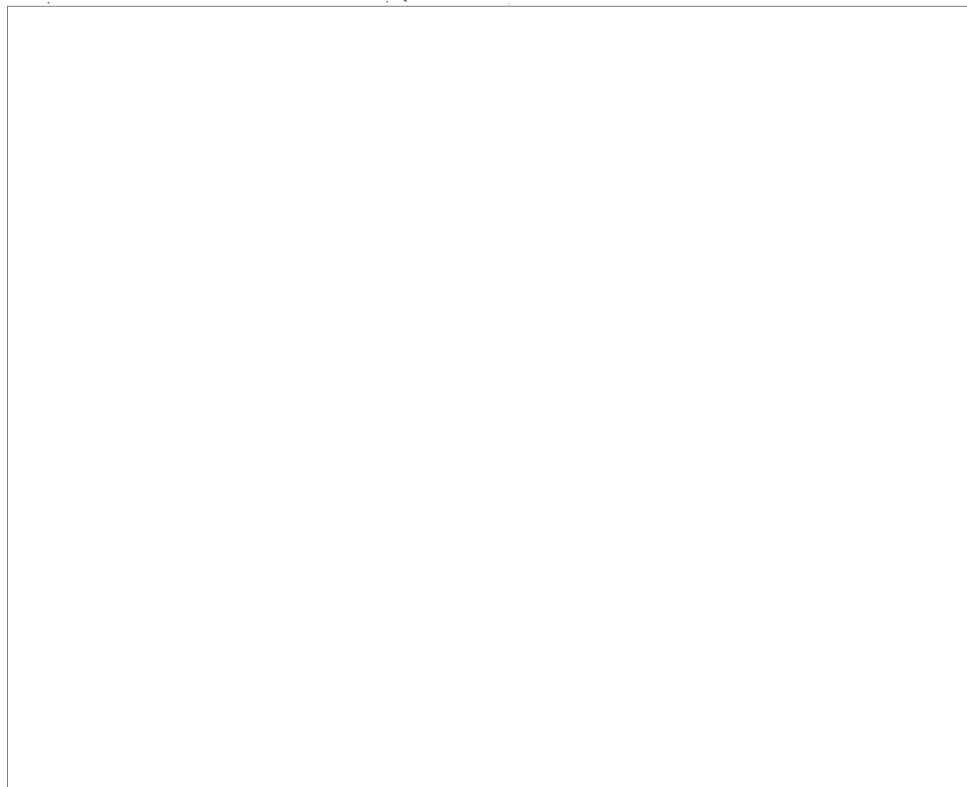


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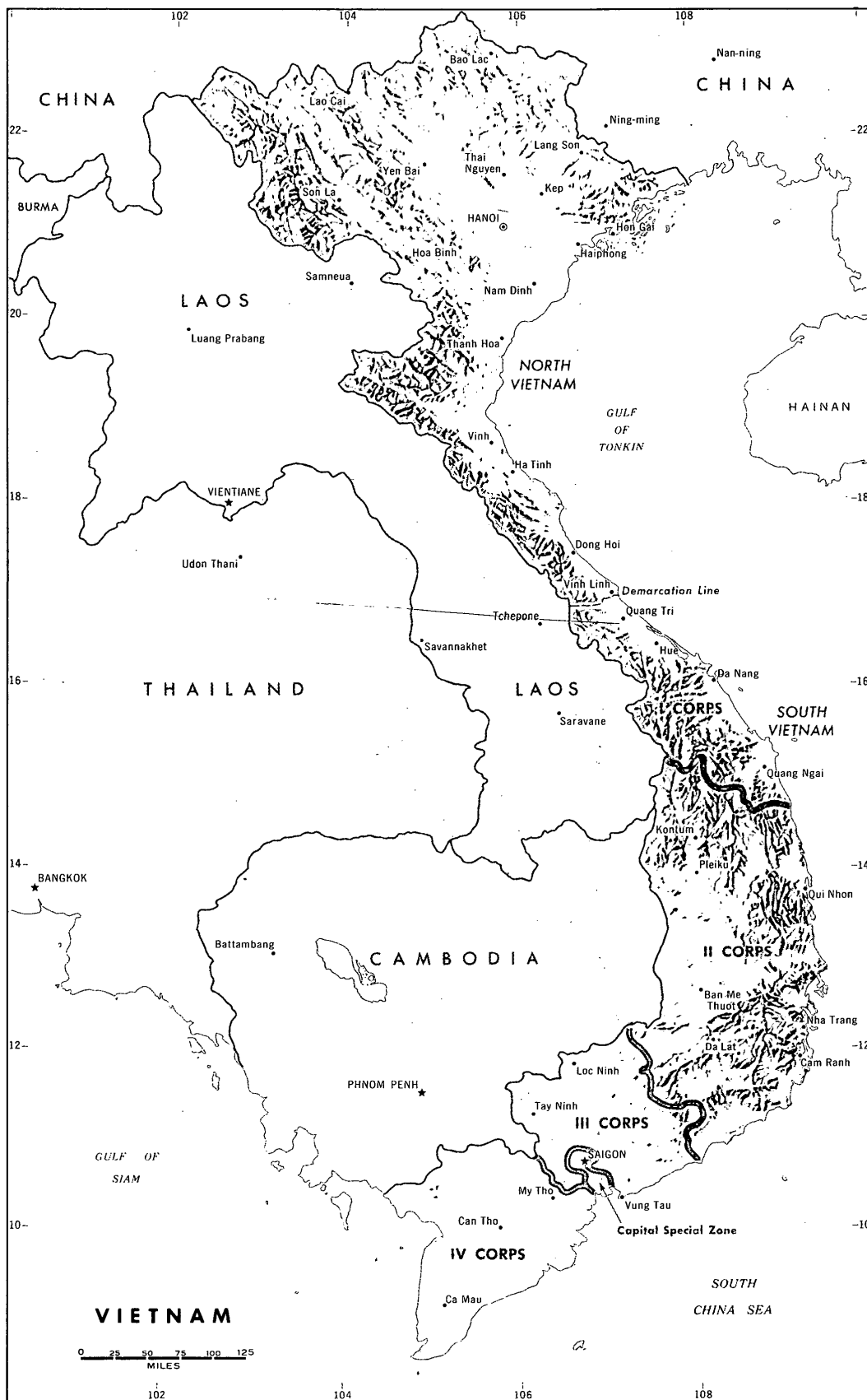
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VIETNAM



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Several recently captured enemy documents provide further evidence of Communist plans to launch attacks soon in and around Saigon. One document contains a list of targets, including Tan Son Nhut Air Base, the Pho Tho race track in Saigon, and references to the first through the seventh precincts of the capital city. Another document shows that reconnaissance elements of the Communist 9th Division were ordered to move into districts northwest and west of Saigon in order to prepare "the springboard area." These preparations were to have been completed by 25 January.

Just to the north of Saigon, a Communist who rallied to the government yesterday reports that the Communist 5th Division intends to mount major attacks against the key Bien Hoa - Long Binh complex shortly after the Tet holiday.

In addition to the 9th and 5th Divisions, the 1st and 7th Divisions, as well as several independent units of regimental and battalion size, are currently deployed in III Corps north and west of Saigon.

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

KOREA

In a recent domestic radiobroadcast, North Korea strongly reaffirmed its policy of pressure and subversion against the South, despite the failure thus far of its efforts to promote insurgency. The broadcast reasserted the correctness of Kim Il-song's strategy for stimulating "revolution" in the South and cautioned against reckless adventurism and defeatism, either of which would retard the growth of the revolutionary movement. In tone and content, the broadcast was virtually identical to Kim's speech of October 1966 which established current policy toward South Korea.

A sharp drop in North Korean harassment along the DMZ since early November and the absence of agent landings along the coast since late December may be due in part to severe winter weather. There were similar sharp declines in North Korean operations during the past two winters.

INDIA

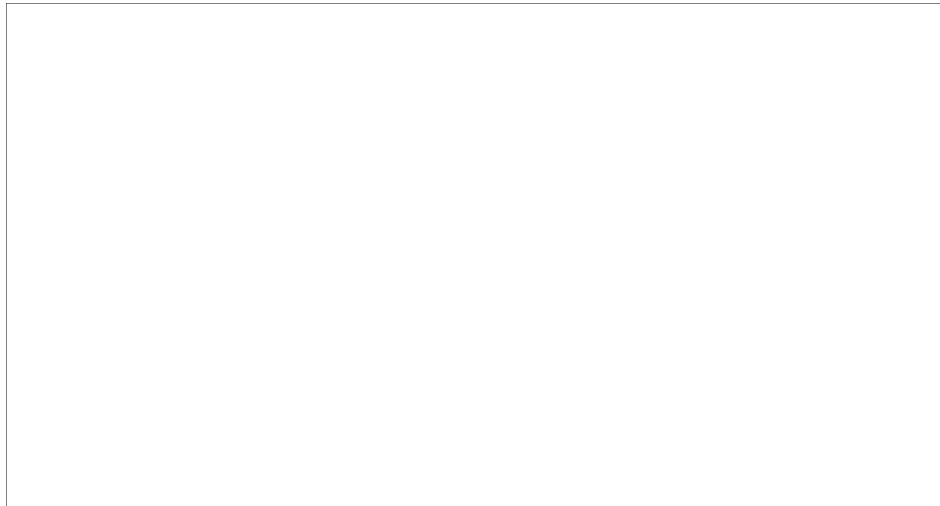
Today's Annex deals with India's agricultural and population problems.

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INDIA'S STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL

SIGNIFICANCE: Population control and agricultural development are two of the most important challenges facing the Indian Government. Unless substantial progress can be made in these two interrelated fields, India's economic and political future will be in serious jeopardy.

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The grave threat of immediate widespread famine that haunted India in the mid-1960s has receded for now, although the food supply problem is far from being solved. After two years of drought in which foodgrain production slumped from 89 million tons in the 1964-65 crop year to 72 million tons in 1965-66 and 75 million tons in 1966-67, production reached a new record in the crop year that ended last June with an estimated 100 million tons. This substantial increase mainly was due to an exceptionally good monsoon, although improved agricultural technology was also instrumental.

The monsoon is still the key factor in agricultural production in India. This year's monsoon has only been average and the new technology--including hybrid seeds and more use of fertilizers and pesticides--can only partially fill the gap. Foodgrain production for the crop year that ends next June will probably slip to around 97 million tons. This should be adequate, along with private and government stocks, to prevent famine, although much of the population will remain poorly fed by Western standards.

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Under the current PL-480 agreement for 2.3 million tons signed late last year, about 1.6 million tons remain to be shipped to India; delivery should be completed by mid-year. This should help build up emergency buffer stocks as a hedge against the vagaries of the next monsoon.

India's expanding population places considerable pressure on the already tight food supply. Some 2.5 to 3 million tons of additional grain is needed each year just to keep pace with an annual population growth of at least 13 million. Moreover, the annual population growth rate, now about 2.5%, could increase in the next few years. If left unchecked, the Indian population--now about 530 million people--would probably double within 30 years.

The Indian government has long been concerned about the population problem. It was among the first to endorse birth control as a national goal, beginning as early as 1951 in the First Five Year Plan. Over the last several years, the program has gained more momentum as more emphasis has been placed on getting out to the rural areas. A new nationwide administrative machinery, directed by competent officials, has also been set up. This administrative effort is being backed up by greatly increased funds to make a "cafeteria" of methods readily available to the population. In the Fourth Five Year Plan, to begin in April 1969, about \$306 million is expected to be budgeted for birth control, a tenfold increase over the third plan allocation.

The long range goal of this effort is to stabilize the population at about 670 million in 1985. This may

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be unrealistic. In any event, substantial results cannot be expected in the near future. Improved public health programs will probably continue to cause the death rate to decline and thus, at least for a while, largely offset any decline in the birth rate.

To check the population explosion and increase agricultural production enough to make India self-sufficient will require more administrative drive and initiative than the Indians have thus far demonstrated in any field. With so many competing development needs, there is always the chance of a letdown in the intensive and sustained effort that is necessary. Failure can only mean impossible demands on the US and other countries for food, a declining standard of living, and the continued descent of the Indian democratic experiment into political chaos.

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